



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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ESTABLISHMENT OF FOUR NEW NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES APPROVED

The Migratory Bird Conservation Commission has approved the establishment of four new national wildlife refuges, according to an announcement today by Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton, who is also Chairman of the Commission. The total area in the new refuges will be 47,991.04 acres.

The Commission also approved at its March 11 meeting the acquisition of additional acreage to six established refuges, bringing the total amount authorized for acquisition to 58,743.47 acres. In addition the Commission approved plans to acquire flowage and easement rights needed in the development of two other refuges.

These actions of the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission carry forward the program of the Department of the Interior to accelerate the expansion of the National Wildlife Refuge system and to effect other improvements to meet the growing demand by the American people for more of these wildlife areas. The acquisition actions have the endorsement of the various State fish and game departments which are involved.

The four new refuges will be: De Soto Bend in the Missouri River, about 15 miles north of Omaha, Nebraska. This will be a combination national wildlife refuge and recreation center. As a refuge it will fill a long recognized need for a resting and feeding place for migratory waterfowl, particularly Canada geese. It is 7,172.09 acres in extent and lies partly in Nebraska and partly in Iowa. As part of the Missouri River flood control project, the Corps of Engineers will cut a canal bypassing what is known as De Soto and Bertrand Bends, thereby creating an ox-bow lake about $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles long and a quarter of a mile wide. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service will develop this area for its wildlife values. About 300,000 to 400,000 geese have been known to rest in the area on their annual migrations. There will be hunting in certain specified places under the jurisdiction of the respective State game departments of Nebraska and Iowa. Several recreational areas will be developed within the projects. Congress provided \$200,000 in the 1958 Interior appropriation to initiate acquisition of this refuge as soon as its establishment was approved by the Commission.

Klamath Marsh in southwestern Oregon is 24,417.95 acres in extent, of which 72 percent is Indian tribal and trust lands. It is located in the upper part of the Klamath Basin and has served the needs of large numbers of migratory waterfowl in the Pacific Flyway. Present plans call for the liquidation of the tribal lands of the Klamath Indian tribe. Acquisition of the lands by the Fish and Wildlife Service will not only save valuable waterfowl lands for the migratory birds but will permit the establishment of public shooting grounds in certain spots which might otherwise be taken over by duck hunting clubs.

The Mariposa area to be acquired is in Kern County in southern California about 40 miles northeast of Bakersfield. It is a valuable wintering ground for geese and ducks in that portion of the Pacific Flyway. The Commission authorized the acquisition of 10,240 acres for this refuge.

The proposed Erie National Wildlife Refuge, the fourth of the new acquisitions approved by the Commission, is 6,161 acres in extent and is located about 35 miles south of the city of Erie, Pennsylvania. This will be the first national wildlife refuge in the State of Pennsylvania and will be a valuable asset to the western part of the Atlantic Flyway.

Commission action in authorizing additional acquisitions for existing refuges follows:

Tamarac, Minnesota--5,806.62 acres will be added to this refuge which has 30,139.31 acres at present.

Malheur, Oregon--381.54 acres of land in the bed of Malheur Lake. Malheur Refuge is approximately 170,000 acres in area at the present time. This acquisition will facilitate the regulation of water in the lake.

Lake Ilo, North Dakota--an addition of 2,340.11 acres for general waterfowl purposes. The Commission previously authorized the purchase of 1,930.09 acres of land for this refuge and an additional 10.71 acres has been donated.

Reelfoot, Kentucky and Tennessee, will get an addition of 1,711.60 acres as the result of Commission approval of the acquisition plans. Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge is about 7 miles northeast of Tiptonville, Tennessee.

Willapa, Washington, National Wildlife Refuge is to have an addition of 512 acres, and Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge in Maryland and Virginia will be increased by .56 of an acre.

At LaCreek National Wildlife Refuge in South Dakota and at Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Montana flowage easements were authorized. This does not increase the size of the refuges but facilitate the use of waters necessary to the complete development of the refuges.

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